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ABSTRACT

As background to an argument for purposive reintegration of discourse study, this paper examines the concept of explanatory discourse as it developed within the Western rhetorical tradition. Following a discussion of the rise of a rhetoric of explanation, the first section cites the roots of the explanatory pedagogy developing during the first four decades of the nineteenth century: (1) the opening up of rhetorical theory implied by Hugh Blair and George Campbell, (2) the largely explanatory nature of pulpit oratory, (3) the growth of courses that treated writing as a discipline separate from speaking, and (4) the importation from secondary level textbooks of the concept of separate explanatory and argumentative themes. The second section of the paper begins with an examination of the rhetorical theorist, Henry Day, and then turns to the tradition that Day was up against--Alexander Bain's modes of discourse. The paper concludes with an examination of four elements that affected the development of twentieth century explanatory rhetoric: the decay of the modal classification of discourse and the failure of any other taxonomy to supplant it; the concurrent popularity of the Deweyite movement; the complete acceptance after 1910 of Fred Newton Scott and Joseph Denney's means of developing paragraphs; and the tendency for expository genres to split off from general composition once their pedagogy had achieved a sufficiently developed formal character, as has been the case for journalism and technical and business writing. (HOD)

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THE RHETORIC OF EXPLANATION

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"Instruction is the proper end of Speech."

--Fenelon, Dialogues sur L'eloquence

I. Explanatory Rhetoric from Aristotle to 1850

There have been a number of unfortunate consequences of the rise of departmentalization in American colleges during the period 1875-1910, but few subjects have suffered so severely from the centrifugal stresses of that period as has the study of discourse. Most of us know the bleak outline of the story: How the novel English departments of the nineteenth century attempted to assimilate rhetoric, oratory, composition, literary scholarship, and philology; how the rise of literary studies gradually diminished the status of the other fields; how rhetoricians, disgusted with the neglect they suffered within English departments, broke away in 1914; how linguists, with the same complaint, broke away in 1924; and how composition, the permanent retarded child of language study, sank into an intellectual oblivion within English, taught by untrained part-timers, its only mission the generation of credit-hours.[1]

It is not my purpose here to bemoan the blindness of our professional ancestors, but rather to provide background to an argument for purposive reintegration of discourse study. The legacy of departmentalization has meant

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that for the past century the study of discourse has been unnaturally fragmented. On this side of the street we have the Speech or Communications scholars, who have long been developing sophisticated perspectives on persuasion and oral discourse. On the other side of the street, in English departments, we have a growing discipline of composition studies, reawakened after a hundred-year sleep, vital and eager to learn all it can about written discourse. It is, I believe, an accident of history that these two fields, which share the same intellectual roots and have many similar interests, have been and continue to be separated.

In order to begin to build bridges between these related disciplines of rhetoric and composition studies, scholars of written discourse must show themselves to be as conscious of the historical and theoretical backgrounds of the discipline they profess as are rhetorical scholars. Let us be honest: composition studies is playing "catch-up" here, and it cannot pretend to as solid and continuous an intellectual history as can rhetoric. On the other hand, there are developments within composition history that rhetoricians may not be aware of, questions only now beginning to be investigated that are vital to all discourse scholarship. Of these, perhaps the most important question concerns the classification of discourse into types.

There are many conflicting theories of discourse taxonomy, but for the purposes of this essay I wish to use the simplest classes possible. Non-belletristic public discourse consists, I will argue, of explanatory rhetoric and persuasive rhetoric, and all writing or speech must have one of these aims or the other as primary. Persuasive discourse has been extensively analyzed by rhetorical scholarship. Explanatory discourse, however, has been given hardly any historical or theoretical attention at all, in spite of the fact

that it is and has been for centuries a vital communicative tool. Logic and dialectic, discourse tools which, as Bacon would say, use but do not advance knowledge, have been minutely examined in their relation to persuasive rhetoric, but simple explanation seems to have been ignored, perhaps because it is so common. In this essay, therefore, I wish to examine the concept of explanatory discourse as it developed within the Western rhetorical tradition and investigate the most important components of explanation as it has been discussed in theories and in pedagogy.

Several major points should be mentioned as prolegomena to a historical study of the theory of explanation. First and most important is that explanation is primarily found in written discourse. Its essential purpose is informative, and the cognitive realities underlying efficient informative discourse are different from those governing effective persuasion. The luxuriant redundancy, for instance, that is a hallmark of effective oral persuasion is necessary in that context, in which information must be captured at first hearing or not at all. In explanatory discourse, however, in which pure information and not persuasion is the purpose, we see a different ordering of cognitive priorities, one that favors written transmission over spoken. Hugh Blair, the first great theorist of written discourse, said it best:

> The advantages of writing above speech are, that writing is both the more extensive, and a more permanent method of communication...it likewise affords this advantage to such as read, above such as hear, that, having the written characters before their eyes, they can arrest the sense of the writer. They can pause, and revolve, and compare, at their leisure, one passage with another: whereas, the voice is fugitive and passing; you must catch the words the moment they are uttered, or you lose them forever.[2]

Because reading allows this recursion, written information may be given only once with the assurance that it will always then be available. Therefore, a sort of discourse aimed at efficiently transmitting information will naturally tend toward written rather than oral forms.

The second point is a corollary of the first. Since explanation as a discrete form of discourse is so clearly related to literacy on the level of cognitive processing, it is a much "younger" discourse form than is persuasion, at least insofar as enunciated theory and common practice go. Although we can trace "technical writing" of a sort back to Babylon and need come no farther forward than the Roman Republic to find scientific explanation as lucid and sophisticated as any written presently, the conception of a form of discourse pedagogy separate from persuasion is relatively recent. Explanation as an aim of discourse is hardly mentioned prior to Bacon, and it is not until the late eighteenth century that "exposition" is seriously spoken of by rhetorical theorists. Clearly the invention of the printing press, the rise of a reading public, the wider dissemination of books, and the changing ideas of knowledge that were brought about by the scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the motivating factors behind the conception of an explanatory form of discourse.

Thus humanity has been using, practicing widely, and studying the processes of oral persuasive discourse for far longer than it has been paying similar attention to explanation. Scholars of rhetoric, used to a high level of critical development, must therefore be asked to forgive this youngster for its callowness and the thinness of the real scholarship surrounding it. Explanation has yet to find its Aristotle, and if this essay is in some ways an admission of how little we know about it, I hope it will also be taken as

an invitation to delve into the many issues surrounding explanatory discourse that are as yet unresolved.

Early References to Explanation.

We can find mention of essentially informative discourse aims throughout the corpus of classical rhetorical theory, but in almost every case the purpose of teaching is subservient to the more central purpose of persuading. Aristotle states that a speech has in reality but two parts: "You state your case, and then you prove it." This Aristotelian "statement of facts," which is also mentioned by Cicero and Quintilian, is explanatory in nature, but the neutral narratio section was always followed immediately by the argumentative confirmatio, which was the center of the speech, building upon the facts established by the narration. Explanation was not an aim or purpose by itself in classical rhetoric. It was not held in high enough esteem by any classical theorist to merit more than a few lines, usually being dismissed with a string of adjectives: narration was "clear," "concise," "short," "lucid," "neutral," etc. Explanation was not, in essence, considered a high-level skill.

Thus the Greek and Roman rhetoricians founded a sort of tradition concerning explanatory discourse: It was a simple skill that could be mastered by almost anyone; it was not an important aim of discourse; it dealt with brute facts and not with thought, and therefore was not considered part of dialectic; it had inherent limitations of length governed by audience patience. In a culture that was still mainly based in orality, general explanation--as opposed to poetry, storytelling, and persuasive speech--could have only a small part to play.

After Quintilian there was only one important addition to the tradition of western rhetoric prior to the Renaissance. Augustine in his On Christian Doctrine, the first manual of Christian homiletics, did lay stress on the necessity and importance of teaching rather than of persuading, a shift of emphasis that affected all preaching

> ....to teach is a necessity. For what men know, it is in their own hands either to do or not to do. But who would say that it is their duty to do what they do not know? On the same principle, to persuade is not a necessity, for it is not always called for; as for example, when the hearer yields his assent to one who simply teaches or gives pleasure.[3]

Augustine lays here the groundwork for the important contribution that homiletics manuals and pulpit oratory would make to the rhetoric of explanation.

Augustine's emphasis on perspicuity and the plain style in Christian teaching had little impact on the classical rhetorical tradition, however. For 1500 years classical rhetoric remained buried or sterile, with changes appearing only in different conceptions of stylistic beauty. There were certainly no advances in any conception of a theory of informative discourse--indeed, the prose styles popular in the vernacular languages at the close of the sixteenth century would seem to work against the idea of clear explanation, as E. D. Hirsch has shown in his The Philosophy of Composition.

By the seventeenth century, however, the culture of England was in a very flux of change. Caxton's press had started powerful forces in motion, and for the first time books were coming to be within the power of people other than the very rich. Attitudes toward what constituted important knowledge were changing, too, and there is no figure more important to that change than Sir Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam. His The Advancement of Learning, published in 1605, was the first great call for awareness of the importance of secular

knowledge and a survey of the states that diverse fields of learning found themselves in as the seventeenth century opened. It is in Bacon that we find the seeds that will develop into a rhetoric of explanatory discourse.

Extensive attention has been paid by rhetoricians to Bacon's discussion of invention ("It is no Invention, but a Remembrance or Suggestion, with an Application.") and of Rhetoric ("The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will."), but much less is known of Bacon's analysis of what he calls the "Method of Tradition or Delivery." "Tradition" and "delivery" are the Baconian terms for the sort of rational knowledge "which is transitive, concerning the expressing or transferring our knowledge to others."[4]

Bacon placed his Method of Tradition in the realm of logic rather than that of rhetoric, but Tradition is not clearly related to the sort of rigorous, demonstrative dialectic that was even then the common meaning of the term "logic." "The doctrine of Method containeth the rules of judgment upon that which is to be delivered," says Bacon, and he is referring to factual information as well as to reasoning. There are six "diversities of Method" that can be used in the transferrence of knowledge, according to Bacon: the "Enigmatical and Disclosed," the "delivery of knowledge in Aphorisms or in Methods," "Assertions and their Proofs," "Questions and their Determinations," "according to subject matter which is handled" (abstract/concrete), and "according unto the light and presuppositions of that which is delivered" (old and new information)[5] As we can see, none of these methods of delivery are specifically persuasive or exclusively dialectical; they are in large part devices for popular and specialized explanation, and when conjoined with Bacon's work on induction, the methods of delivery would result in the first scientific exposition.

Bacon's intellectual legacy, which lay undeveloped during the years of the Civil War and the early years of the Commonwealth, was taken up in the mid-1650's by a group of "natural philosophers" meeting in Cambridge and London. The Royal Society of London, as it was to be denominated in its charter of 1662, consisted of scientists and scholars who were drawn together by a dual belief in the importance of "secular knowledge"--knowledge of the workings of the natural world--and in the power of the inductive method of Francis Bacon to solve the riddles that that world proposed to those who studied it. Many of the contributions of the Royal Society have been detailed by scholarship; certainly the Society's contribution to important changes in the English prose style has been shown.[6] The neo-Ciceronian tradition of figurative rhetoric that had contributed to the difficulty of reading English prose of the sixteenth century was assailed by the Royal Society; their Record stated that in all of the society's writings, "the matter of fact shall be barely stated, without any prefaces, apologies, or rhetorical flourishes,"[7] and they promised "a constant Resolution, to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style. . .bringing all things, as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can."[8]

The great apologist and polemicist of the Royal Society was Thomas Sprat, whose History of the Royal Society of London was published in 1667. The History does not contain specific references to explanatory discourse as a theory, but the book is filled with references to the methods of the Society's members, and it is clear that their writings were essentially explanatory:

> Their purpose is, in short, to make fruitful Records of all of the Works of Nature, or Art, which come within their reach: so that the present Age, and posterity, may be able to put a mark on the Errors, which have been strengthened by long prescription: to restore the Truths, that have lain neglected: to push on those, which are already known: and to make the

> way more passable, to what remains unreveal'd. This is the compass of their Design. And to accomplish this, they have indeavored, to separate the knowledge of Nature, from the colours of Rhetoric, the devices of Fancy, or the delightful deceit of Fables. . .They have attempted to free it from the Artifice, and Humors, and Passions, of Sects; to render it an Instrument, whereby Mankind may obtain a Dominion over Things, and not only over one anothers Judgements.[9]

It is in this final sentence that we can see clearly the division that Sprat is making between the discourses of his fellow Society members and the essentially artificial devices he imputes to rhetorical discourse. One deals with the realities of nature, while the other merely attempts to sway the fancies of weak men. "Dominion over Things" was to be henceforth one of the primary purposes of explanation.

It is important to realize here that Sprat is opposing scientific discourse to dialectic as well as to rhetoric. The sorts of informational communications he defends here are meant, to use Baconian terms, not merely to use knowledge, but to aid in the progression of knowledge. Again and again Sprat draws a contrast between the sterile, self-referential "knowledge" of traditional logic and rhetoric and the fruitfulness of the inductive method. Practitioners of traditional logic and rhetoric have been "wholly employed about the productions of their own minds, and neglecting all the works of Nature, that are without them." The experimenter of the Royal Society, on the other hand, "invents not what he does out of himself, but gathers it from the footsteps and progress of Nature." Finally, says Sprat, acceptance of this new sort of discourse can only lead to positive results: "Experimental Philosophy will prevent mens spending the strength of their thoughts about Disputes by turning them to Works." Thus, in the first important defense of the scientific method, we also find the first statement of the purposes and ends of explanatory discourse.

The opinions of Sprat and the Royal Society were extended and made vastly more popular by the work of the man who is arguably the most important intellectual figure in English history: John Locke. Himself a member of the Royal Society, Locke spread its gospel of induction and explanatory discourse far beyond the boundaries of Cambridge and London. As Wilbur S. Howell puts it, Locke gave British learning "a fresh and enduring set of expectations concerning discourse" which "led the intellectual community to see popular and learned exposition as the basic kind of speaking and writing."[10]

Locke himself mentions discourse in relatively few places in his works, but his position upon it is implicit in almost everything he wrote. Most obviously apparent is his active distrust and dislike for the canons of traditional rhetoric. Unlike Bacon, who approved of and even admired rhetoric, and Sprat, who considered it pointless and unnecessary, Locke condemned rhetoric as "that powerful instrument of error and deceit."[11] In a famous passage he sets up the desirable ends of discourse against what he considers the false ends promoted by rhetoric: "wit and fancy" are opposed to "dry truth and real knowledge", "pleasure and delight" to "information and improvement." All the arts of rhetoric, says Locke, "are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment"; they "are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided." Up against the "arts of fallacy" of traditional neo-Ciceronian persuasive rhetoric, Locke sets out is own desiderata for discourse:

> The ends of language in our discourse with others being chiefly these three: first, to make known one man's thoughts or ideas to another; secondly, to do it with as much ease and quickness as possible; and thirdly, thereby to convey the knowledge of things.[12]

As Howell says, it is obvious that for Locke the basic type of discourse is the explanation, and his basic aim is always communication or instruction.

Eighteenth-Century Explanatory Rhetoric

Up to this point we have been discussing points of view that are clearly separate from the mainstream of rhetorical theory and instruction, which was until the mid-eighteenth century overwhelmingly neo-Ciceronian, concerned with stylistic and figurative treatments of persuasive discourse. After Locke, however, who instituted a revaluation of all values within English intellectual life, it was inevitable that some accomodation would eventually have to be found between the traditional art of discourse theory and the emerging phenomenon of popular and scientific explanatory discourse. Such an accomodation was not immediately forthcoming, however; rhetoricians stood by their moldering Ciceronianism for more than sixty years while the ever-busier printing presses of the Georgian period piled up mountains of books with which their theories were utterly unable to deal. It was not until the late 1740's, when the polymath Adam Smith, first of the great "new rhetoricians" of the eighteenth century, gave his first course of lectures on rhetoric, that rhetorical theory opened up to explanation.

Although Smith's lecture notes were not published during his lifetime--and he ordered them burned along with other manuscripts as he approached death--his lectures had a keen impact on the other two great Scots rhetoricians of the century, George Campbell and Hugh Blair. When student transcriptions of Smith's rhetoric lectures were discovered in this century, the debt of both Campbell and Blair to Smith's ideas became clear for the first time. Smith was a ground-breaking thinker in a number of ways, but for this discussion we need examine only one element of his theory of

rhetoric: his classes of discourse. Smith introduces a rhetorical classthat was unheard of by the neo-Ciceronians: the didactic:

> Every discourse proposes either barely to relate some fact or to prove some proposition. The first is the kind of discourse called a narrative one; the latter is the foundation of two sorts of discourses, the didactic and the rhetorical. The former proposes to put before us the arguments on both sides of the question in their true light, giving each its proper degree of influence, and has it in view to persuade no further than the arguments themselves appear convincing. The rhetorical, again, endeavours by all means to persuade us, and for this purpose it magnifies all the arguments on the one side, and diminishes or conceals those that might be brought on the other side contrary to that which it is designed that we should favor. Persuasion, which is the primary design in the rhetorical, is but the secondary design inthe didactic. It endeavours to persuade us only so far as the strength of the argument is convincing; instruction is the main end.[13]

Later, Smith was to propose that discourse is either historical, poetical, didactic, or oratorical, and to detail the two methods by which didactic writing is accomplished: the analytic and the synthetic.

Smith was the first rhetorical theorist to attempt to make rhetoric a general theory of all types of discourse, not merely the persuasive. His "didactic discourse" is not general explanation as we now conceive it, since it was based in scientific writing and in the "old logic" of dialectical demonstration, but Smith's thought is important because of the possibilities it opened up for rhetorical theory later in the century--in particular the theory of George Campbell.

If Smith was the first of the new rhetoricians to admit explanation into rhetoric, George Campbell was the greatest. He was a systematic and comprehensive thinker, and he built explanation into his rhetorical system in both abstract and concrete senses. In theoretical terms, his The Philosophy of Rhetoric of 1776 proposed a complete renovation of rhetorical theory, one which broadened the scope of rhetoric to include all discourse, oral and

written. On a practical level, Campbell's Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence brought exposition as a method to the fore in its discussion of homiletic techniques. Both books made important contributions to the rhetoric of explanation and deserve close examination.

The definition of eloquence with which Campbell opens his Philosophy is in striking contrast to previous treatments, all of which had involved discussions of persuasion that harked back to Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "the art of discovering all the available means of persuasion." For Campbell, eloquence was a much more general thing: "that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end,"[14] and the ends of discourse, for Campbell, were based in faculty psychology and were thus multiple: "All the ends of speaking are reducible to four; every speech being intended to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will." Different sorts of discourse were determined by which of these faculties--understanding, imagination, passions, or will--was being addressed.

The most basic of Campbell's faculties was the understanding. Since he considered that the faculties "ascend in a regular progression," every discourse must first address the understanding. Many discourses, however, addressed the understanding exclusively:

> When a speaker addresseth himself to the understanding, he proposes the instruction of his hearers, and that, either by explaining some doctrine unknown, or not distinctly comprehended by them, or by proving some position disbelieved or doubted by them--In other words, he proposes either to dispel ignorance or to vanquish error. In the one, his aim is their information; in the other, their conviction. Accordingly, the predominant quality of the former is perspicuity, of the latter, argument.[15]

Thus the two sorts of discourses addressed to the understanding are the explanatory and the controversial. The other three sorts of discourses,according to Campbell, are imaginative, pathetic, and persuasive, each sort addressed to a corresponding faculty. Although faculty psychology has long been discredited, we must recognize the importance of Campbell's use of it to widen the horizons of rhetorical theory. By opening up "nonpoetical oratory" to letters, philosophical dialogues, essays, political writings, historical works, and didactic treatises, The Philosophy of Rhetoric paved the way for the more complex rhetorical pedagogy that would be introduced in the nineteenth century.

If Campbell's Philosophy was an important theoretical statement on the necessity of widening the definition of rhetoric, his Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, given yearly from 1772 through 1795 and published in 1807 after his death, provided the corresponding practical application. Campbell's lectures have as their unstated theme the fact that pulpit oratory, at the stage of development that the Anglican Church found itself in during the eighteenth century, was essentially explanatory. There is strong evidence that the study of pulpit oratory, of which Campbell's Lectures are a popular representative, was the radical principle behind the practical study of methods of explanation in rhetoric.

To understand how the study of pulpit eloquence could act as the parent to explanatory rhetoric, we must remind ourselves that religious eloquence had changed in nature by the eighteenth century. Where Augustine in his recommendations to Christian orators could advise a largely conventional Ciceronian persuasive rhetoric to his preachers as they spread throughout the world to make converts, by 1772 most Europeans were Christians and most

Englishmen were Anglicans. They did not need to be persuaded to join the faith; the element of persuasion was not lost, but it had been undermined by attacks on the Doctrine of Works and increasingly was less important to pulpit orators than was explanation of doctrines. Campbell puts the case well; after introducing his four faculties, he goes on:

> First, then, in order to effect the reformation of men,that is, in order to bring them to a right disposition and practice, there are some things which of necessity they must be made to know. No one will question, that the knowledge of the nature and extent of the duties which they are required to practise, and of the truths and doctrines which serve as motives to practice, is absolutely necessary. The explication of these in the pulpit forms a species of discourses which falls under the first class above mentioned. It is addressed to the understanding, its aim is information, the only obstacle it hath to remove is ignorance. Sermons of this sort we shall henceforth distinguish by the term explanatory.[16]

What is particularly striking about the Lectures is not that the theory has changed from the Philosophy, but rather than Campbell gives so much space to explanatory sermons. Five full chapters are devoted to explanation, and the other sorts of sermons get but one chapter each. It is in the Lectures, too, that we meet with the term "exposition" for the first time in a clearly rhetorical context, as Campbell describes the two major sorts of explanatory sermons as expositions or lectures:

> In discourses of the first class, it is the chief design of the speaker to explain the import of a portion of scripture. . .In the second, it is his great scope to deduce from a passage. . .useful reflections concerning providence, the economy of grace, or the conduct of human life. . .the ultimate end of the former is to teach the people to read the scriptures with understanding, and of the latter to accustom them to read them with reflection.[17]

Campbell's emphasis upon explanatory sermons in the Lectures probably did more to spread the conception of an explanatory rhetoric than the material in his theoretical treatise; we have long underestimated the effect of the tradition

of pulpit oratory on the rhetoric of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although most of Campbell's directions for creating explanatory sermons were technical and rooted in scriptural interpretation, his stress on explanation and his term "exposition" would appear in the nineteenth century as parts of a new rhetoric--a rhetoric of writing and of explanation.

Hugh Blair was to be another contributor to this movement. Though not as original a thinker as Campbell, Blair was a more popular author whose works found their way far beyond theory and seminary classes. Blair had an ear more keenly attuned to social changes than Campbell's, and his contribution to the rhetoric of explanation lies mainly in his careful extension of rhetorical theory to encompass writing as well as speaking. Although Blair's theory merely parrots Campbell's in many areas--for Blair, eloquence was "the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak"--he goes much more deeply than Campbell into literary and belletristic forms. For that reason it was Blair and not Campbell who would act as the intellectual godfather to the college courses in rhetoric and writing that sprang up as the nineteenth century opened. Blair put great stress on the practice of composition, a term little used in rhetorical theory prior to his lectures:

> The study of composition, important in itself at all times, has acquired additional importance from the taste and manners of the present age. . .To all the liberal arts much attention has been paid. and to none more than to the beauty of language, and the grace and elegance of every kind of writing.[18]

Seeing in writing an important cultural trend, Blair accordingly devoted lengthy discussions both to composing and to "discerning and relishing the beauties of composition."

Although Blair divided prose into generic categories such as historical writing, philosophical writing, fictitious history, etc., his literary

classification does not add much to any theory of explanation. A more interesting aspect of Blair's thought is found in his analysis of the different parts of a discourse, especially the part he calls the narration or explication section. In broad terms the narration section of a speech recommended by Blair corresponds to the narratio or statement of facts in classical rhetorical theory: "To be clear and distinct, to be probable, and to be concise, are the qualities which critics chiefly require in narration." In sermons, however, the narration of a secular speech is replaced by what Blair calls the explication section, and in his discussion of explication Blair both assumes and extends Campbell's position on explanatory homiletics.[19] The following passage on explication is especially interesting coming from a writer who condemns topical invention:

> To explain the doctrine of the text with propriety; to give a full and perspicuous account of the nature of that virtue or duty which forms the subject of the discourse, is properly the didactic part of preaching. . . The great art of succeeding in it, is to meditate profoundly on the subject, so as to be able to place it in a clear and strong point of view. Consider what light other passages of scripture throw upon it; consider whether it be a subject nearly related to some other from which it is proper to distinguish it; consider whether it can be illustrated to advantage by comparing it with, or opposing it to some other thing; by inquiring into causes, or tracing effects; by pointing out examples, or appealing to the feelings of the hearers; that thus, a definite, precise, circumstantial view may be afforded of the doctrine to be inculcated.[20]

This passage may well be a "missing link" between the topics of classical invention, which Blair rejected as artificial, and the "methods of exposition," which were to appear during the nineteenth century as specifically informative devices.

Rhetoric and Composition

Up until the end of the eighteenth century it is not difficult to follow the rise of explanatory discourse and its incorporation into rhetorical

theory. In the early nineteenth century, however, events occurred which were to lead to the divorce of rhetoric from composition, oral discourse theory from writing theory, theory itself from practical applications, and, ultimately, explanatory rhetoric from persuasive rhetoric. These separations were all to result from the changing cultural needs of nineteenth-century America. Let us look more closely at how discourse theory fared during that strange century.

Most educational innovations of the nineteenth century were American rather than British, and we must shift our focus to the New World as the century opens in order to understand the development of the rhetoric of "exposition". In 1800 the influence of Blair and Campbell was tremendously strong in America, and Blair's work in particular had made rhetoric a very popular college subject. Courses which had previously used such neo-Ciceronian texts as John Holmes' The Art of Rhetoric Made Easy were switching to Blair's Lectures and the early elocutionary textbooks, and students were clamoring to learn elocution and study belles-lettres. New professorships of rhetoric were springing up at both recently-founded and established colleges, and the rhetoric being taught was more realistic and flexible than it had been for centuries.

Until the appearance of Richard Whately's Elements of Rhetoric in 1828, curricular matters in rhetorical pedagogy proceeded smoothly enough. Under the aegis of the reforms of Campbell and Blair, rhetoric courses began to deal seriously with written composition and with didactic and explanatory discourse as well as with persuasive oratory. A number of books appeared both in England and in the U.S. at this time dealing with composition and belles-lettres on the college level, but they were overwhelmingly derivative of

Blair's Lectures and are thus of little interest. To discover the roots of explanatory rhetoric in America it is necessary to look at books that appeared during the period 1800-1830 on the secondary and elementary level of instruction. It is in these "grammar and composition" books, and not in college textbooks, that we see explanatory rhetoric develop and also see the beginning of the practical split between expository and persuasive discourse.

It is difficult to know for certain when textbooks first appeared that were meant to teach pre-college students composition, as opposed to mere grammar, spelling, and sentence-construction. Such books, paper-bound and ephemeral, have not survived in large numbers. Those we do have, however, strongly suggest that much of what we have come to know as the pedagogy of explanation developed between 1801 and 1835 in such books as John Walker's The Teacher's Assistant in English Composition, John Rippingham's Rules for English Composition, Daniel Jaudon's The Union Grammar, and William Russell's A Grammar of Composition. These secondary texts all make the important distinction between writing on explanatory topics and writing on persuasive topics--a distinction that would later become central to discourse education on all levels.

Certainly the seminal book for "composition" as opposed to "rhetoric" must be John Walker's The Teacher's Assistant, first published in London in 1801. Walker, an elocutionist, actor, lexicographer, and friend of Samuel Johnson, wrote the book when he was 69, complaining that there was "a scarcity of books on this subject." A scarcity there certainly was, and Walker evolved a set of principles, partly original and partly based in classical rhetoric, that were to become the guiding forces in the early pedagogy of composition.

Walker's main contribution was the division of compositions into two general sorts, which he called "themes" (this seems to be the first vernacular use of a now ubiquitous term) and "regular subjects." "Themes" were argumentative-- "the proving of some truth"--and were set up using a modified version of classical arrangement. Whatever was not argumentative fell into the category of a "regular subject," and regular-subject assignments were usually only a single word: education, government, peace, war, etc. Walker proposed an arrangement for his regular subjects that was novel and easy to teach; regular subjects, he proposed, should be arranged with the same sort of rigidity as themes, the only difference being that the arrangement form was to be different. Regular subjects had five divisions: Definition, Cause, Antiquity or Novelty, Universality and Locality, and Effects.[21] Walker's "rules for regular subjects" bring us a long step closer to the "methods of exposition." They are a curious amalgam of heuristics for invention and formalized arrangements, and they show the tendency of explanatory techniques to be attached to both inventio and dispositio. Walker himself says of his "rules":

> There are few subjects that will admit of being treated in so regular a way as to be viewed in all the points set down in the rules. I have been at no small pains to collect so many as I have done (examples of subjects using all five "rules"); and, even in a few of these, I have been obliged to drop some of the points; but as there is not any subject which may not be considered in two or three of these points of view, I flatter myself the method here adopted will be found useful to young people, who must generally be furnished with some hints to be able to say any thing upon any subject.[22]

Walker himself seemed to see his points as partially organizational and partially inventive.

The Teacher's Assistant received at least eleven printings in England between 1801 and 1853, but it had only one American edition, in Boston in 1810. That one edition was enough, however, to make Walker the exemplar for a whole school of composition pedagogy. Walker's most popular follower was Daniel Jaudon, whose The Union Grammar of 1811 went through at least four printings before 1828. Jaudon used Walker's perspective unchanged (giving no credit): "A Theme is some truth, maxim, or proposition given to be maintained, proved, or illustrated: as 'Delays are dangerous'; 'Trust not apperances". . .etc." This is an exact echo of Walker's treatment, examples and all. "A Regular Subject,"on the other hand, "may be any single word, clause, or member of a sentence, given or assumed, as the ground of an essay: as Time, death, love, beauty, friendship, the advantages of a good education." Jaudon expands on Walker's rules as more length:

1. If your subject require explanation, define or explain it.
2. Show what is the cause of your subject; that is, what is the occasion of it, or what it is derived from.
3. Show whether your subject be ancient or modern; i.e., what it was in ancient times, and what it is at present.
4. Show whether your subject relates to the whole world, or only a particular part of it.
5. Examine whether your subject be good or bad; show wherein that goodness or badness consists and what are the advantages or disadvantages which arise from it.[23]

Here in Jaudon's version, Walker's "rules" seem to lean more toward invention than organization.

Jaudon made Walker's pedagogy standard, and most secondary texts used it between 1815 and 1840. William Russell, for instance, divided "didactic compositions" into "simple themes" and "complex themes"; simple themes were explanatory and complex themes were argumentative. Thus did the term become generalized, and all student papers have remained "themes" down to the

present. Russell's book, A Grammar of Composition, is derivative, but it may have contributed toward the college-level acceptance of explanatory rhetoric. Walker's pedagogy, at any rate, soon turned up in college-level texts. A clear example is James Boyd's Elements of Rhetoric and Literary Criticism of 1844, which divided "the various kinds of original composition" into Narrative, Descriptive, and Miscellaneous Essays. These Miscellaneous Essays were to be written, accordning to Boyd, using the following method: "The Definition, The Cause, The Antiquity or Novelty, The Universality or Locality, The Effects." By 1844, as can be seen, the heuristic element in Walker's rules had been largely displaced by the organizational element.

Another a central influence on explanatory rhetoric--though a negative one-- was Richard Whately's The Elements of Rhetoric of 1828. Whately, of course, denied that rhetoric should be "the Art of Composition, universally"; instead of this Campbellian conception, the Elements proposes "to treat of Argumentative Composition, generally and exclusively."[24] Though Whately did not limit rhetoric to oral discourse, his influential insistance that rhetoric should be exclusively argumentative did much to undermine the Campbell-Blair reforms of the late eighteenth century. After Whately, a narrow insistance upon argumentative discourse and a growing elocutionary tendency would be the hallmarks of British rhetorical theory for over fifty years.

In America, where the rhetoric of Blair had a powerful hold, Whately's influence was less. His book was widely used, but it never approached the almost incredible popularity of Blair's Lectures. The hundreds of tiny colleges that were spring up around the country all needed textbooks, and Blair was the most established text by 1815; as college teachers raised on Blairian rhetoric worked westward, seeding the new colleges and academies with

what they had learned in the East, a conception of rhetoric as being concerned with all sorts of discourse took hold in the United States and never really died out.[25] Whately's revisionism caught on late and did not exert any strong influence over the growing and increasingly discrete courses in composition that were being added to the study of elocution and oral rhetoric.

Beginning in the 1820's, we see a new sort of textbook appear in American colleges as a supplement to the Blair or Holmes or Campbell treatises. These new textbooks were usually written by a college teacher as a codification of his course. They were not as discursive or as theoretical as the older books; they often contained exercises or questions at the end of each chapter. They were meant for the use of a class, not a lecture. They were, of course, the earliest college-level composition textbooks, and pointing out the first one is not difficult: Samuel P. Newman's 1827 text A Practical System of Rhetoric.

Newman is where college composition in America starts, and in his book, though it was largely devoted to belletristic/stylistic concerns of a Blairian sort, we see the beginning also of explanatory pedagogy on an advanced level. Newman was the first clear proponent of a discourse-classification system that would later come to be known as the "modes" or "forms" of discourse, but it is not to that classification ("Writings are distinguished from each other, as didactic, persuasive, argumentative, descriptive, and narrative"), which Newman hardly developed, that we should look for his contribution to explanation. Much more interesting is his discussion of what he called "amplification."

Newman uses the term "amplification" with a meaning completely dissociated from the stylistic meaning of the term given it by Blair and Campbell. Amplification, for Newman, is "the power of enlarging upon the

positions and opinions advanced." It is an essentially invention-oriented technique, and Newman's discussion of amplification is the first heuristic treatment of non-topical invention in the literature. The heuristic Newman supplies is simple. Although it is impossible to catalogue all the ways in which writers amplify their propositions, he says, there are a few general principles to be used. For argumentative amplification Newman recommends Induction, Testimony, and Analogy, all standard Blairian or classical methods. For amplification the object of which is "the more full exhibition of the meaning of what is asserted," however--that is, for explanatory amplification--Newman recommends the following methods:

1. By formal definitions of the words, or phrases, used in stating the proposition, or head of discourse. . .
2. By stating the proposition in different ways, at the same time showing what limitations are designed to apply to it, or wherein there is danger of mistake, which it is necessary to guard against. . .
3. By stating particular cases, or individual instances, and thus shewing what is meant by a general proposition.
4. By illustrations, especially by formal comparisons and historical allusions. . .[26]

These "general principles of amplification" presented by Newman are important not only because they show signs of being early "methods of exposition" but also because they are so clearly inventive in nature. Newman's text was very popular, and his concept of amplification was picked up by a number of other authors.

These, then, were the roots of explanatory pedagogy as it developed during the first four decades of the nineteenth century: 1.) The opening up of rhetorical theory implied by Blair and Campbell; 2.) The largely explanatory nature of the tradition of pulpit oratory; 3.) The growth of courses that treated writing as a discipline separate from speaking; 4.) The importation from secondary-level textbooks of the conception of separate explanatory and

argumentative themes and of the methods used to invent and organize explanatory material. During the remainder of the nineteenth century, these factors would coalesce to produce the beginnings of modern explanatory rhetoric.

NOTES

1. This story is well told in William Riley Parker, "Where Do English Departments Come From?" College English 28 (1967), 339-351.

2. Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (Philadelphia: Troutman and Hayes, 1853), pp. 77-78.

3. Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, trans. J. F. Shaw (Chicago: Encyclopedia Brittanica, 1952), p. 686.

4. Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, in Selected Works of Sir Francis Bacon, ed. Hugh G. Dick (New York: Modern Library, 1955), p. 299.

5. Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, pp. 304-307.

6. Richard Foster Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," PMLA 45 (1930), 977-1009.

7. Record of the Royal Society, quoted in Wilbur Samuel Howell, Eighteenth Century British Logic and Rhetoric (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 481.

8. Thomas Sprat, The History of the Royal Society of London (London: J. Martyn, 1667), p. 113.

9. Sprat, History of the Royal Society, pp. 61-62.

10. Howell, Eighteenth Century British Logic and Rhetoric, p. 501.

11. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Philadelphia: Kay and Troutman, 1849), p. 328.

12. Locke, Human Understanding, p. 325.

13. Adam Smith, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, ed. John M. Lothian (London: Thomas Nelson and Son, 1963), p. 58.

14. George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (London: William Tegg, 1850), p. 1.

15. Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, pp. 2-3.

16. George Campbell, Lectures on systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence (Boston Lincoln and Edmands, 1832), p. 133.

17. Campbell, Lectures, p. 142.

18. Blair, Lectures, p. 12.

19. We can only guess about the effect that Campbell's lectures may have had on the finally-published work of Blair. Indeed, we are not even certain to what degree Blair was influenced by Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, published seven years before Blair put his Lectures into final form for publication. These lectures, published 24 years after their first delivery, may have gone through many revisions during that time. It would be fascinating to compare student notes from Blair's pre-1776 lectures with his finished book. Whether Campbell's lectures on pulpit eloquence, which were delivered in Aberdeen, might have come in some form to Blair in Edinburgh is a question that eighteenth-century scholars might be able to answer. Presumably both Campbell and Blair were deeply indebted to Smith.

20. Blair, Lectures, p. 352.

21. John Walker, The Teacher's Assitant in English Compostion (Carlisle, George Kline, 1808), pp. 49-50. Walker wrote a charming little poem to illustrate these rules for treating a subject, a poem which I cannot forebear to reproduce here:

> If your subject definition do need,
> First briefly define it, then proceed:
> Thus Education, more at large defined,
> Becomes the culture of the human mind.
> Next, if you can, find out your subject's cause,
> And show from whence its origin it draws:
> And thus, if Education's cause be traced,
> It will be found in love parental placed.
> Ancient or modern, may your subject be;

Pursue it, therefore, to antiquity:
Thus, Education ever will appear,
To have been the ancients' first and greatest care.
Your subject may to distant nations roam,
Or else relate to objects nearer home:
Thus, different modes of Education yield,
To every writer's thoughts, an ample field.
The subject which you treat is good or ill,
Or else a mixture of each principle:
Good Education ranks us with the best,
While bad degrades a man below a beast.
And ere your subject a conclusion know,
The advantage or the disadvantage show.

A number of textbooks reprinted this poem without credit.

22. Walker, The Teacher's Assistant, p. 50.

23. Daniel Jaudon, The Union Grammar, 4th Edition (Philadelphia: Towar and Hogan, 1828). p. 201.

24. Richard Whately, The Elements of Rhetoric, ed. David Ehninger (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1963), p. 6.

25. Frederick Rudolph estimates that over 700 colleges might have been founded and then collapsed in America during the period 1776-1860. In 1776 there were nine American colleges, and in 1860 there were 250, of which 182 still survive. See Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 47.

26. Samuel P. Newman, A Practical System of Rhetoric (New York: Mark H. Newman, 1843), p. 23.

THE RHETORIC OF EXPLANATION

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"Instruction is the proper end of Speech."

-Fenelon, Dialogues sur L'eloquence

II. Explanatory Rhetoric 1850 - Present

In the first section of this essay we followed the rise of a rhetoric of explanation from roots in the teaching function of homiletic discourse, the opening of rhetorical theory to technical and scientific uses in the seventeenth century and to general and written discourse in the eighteenth. The changes in rhetorical instruction that resulted from the novel theories of George Campbell and Hugh Blair gave rise to a new form of pedagogy, seen first on the secondary and then on the college level: a pedagogy of informative discourse. We have seen how the new multi-mode rhetoric of Campbell was challenged by Richard Whately's contention that rhetoric is essentially persuasive. In this section we will begin with an examination of the rhetorical theorist who challenged Whately's views most strongly and established a sophisticated rhetoric of informative discourse in the mid-nineteenth century: Henry Day.

The Explanatory Rhetoric of Henry Day

In 1850 the rhetoric of explanation made a large step along the road to maturity: Henry Noble Day published his Elements of the Art of Rhetoric. Day was the most thoughtful and original rhetorical thinker of the nineteenth

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century, a polymath who, had he devoted all of his time to rhetoric alone, might have emerged as the dominant voice during the period 1850-1890. Had this occurred, had Day rather than Alexander Bain been the "father of composition," the history of writing pedagogy might have been very different. No one examining Day's works today can escape the feeling that his rhetoric represents a theoretical "road not taken"--and not taken to our detriment.

Henry Day was born in New Haven and educated at Yale--he was the nephew of reigning President Jeremiah Day--where he studied for the ministry as well as learning grammar and rhetoric from Chauncey Goodrich. From the Preface to the Elements we know that Day studied homiletics and pulpit eloquence as well as rhetoric. He may have known William Russell, and was almost certainly educated in the composition pedagogy of Walker. The influence of George Campbell and Franz Theremin is powerful in his works. Whatever his training may have been, though--and there is much we can only guess at--Day's rhetoric, when it appeared, was both a call for a return to Campbellian reforms and a revolutionary tocsin. The Elements differed from other texts in three ways, which were detailed by Day in his Preface:

1.) Day emphasizes invention, not style. Concentration on style, said Day (speaking probably of Boyd, Newman, and R. G. Parker's texts, which exemplified the sentence-practice pedagogy of the early nineteenth century), has turned composition into "repulsive and profitless drudgeries."

2.) He attempts to systematize rhetoric in all of its forms, not merely argumentation.

3.) He proposes to treat rhetoric as an art and provide practical instruction, not merely empty theorizing.

Day's initial claim deserves treatment in a comprehensive essay on invention in the nineteenth century,[1] and his final claim treatment in an essay on changing textbooks techniques and styles. It is his middle claim that affects this inquiry.

Day put his case for discourse-wide rhetorical theory this way:

> Covering the entire field of pure discourse as addressed to another mind, it (rhetoric) is redeemed from the shackles and embarrassments of that view which confines it to mere argumentative composition, or the art of producing Belief. This view of rhetoric, in which Dr. Whately is followed by the writer of the article in the Encyclopedia Britannica, consistently carried out, excludes all Explanatory Discourse. . . Instruction and conviction are as widely distinguished as perception and belief; and it must appear on a very slight investigation of the subject that "generally speaking the same rules will" not "be serviceable for attaining each of these objects." Narration and argumentation have little in common, so far as the conduct of the thought is concerned. There is very little, accordingly, in Dr. Whately's treatise, except under the head of Style, which has any application to Explanatory Discourse. . .[2]

Thus did Day take Whately on directly, contradicting the most respected "modern" theorist of rhetorical theory.

The rhetoric of Henry Day was organized around what he called the "objects of discourse," which "are but four in number, viz: EXPLANATION, CONVICTION, EXCITATION, and PERSUASION." This was a modified form of Campbellian faculty psychology:

> The process by which a new conception is produced, is by Explanation; that by which a new judgment is produced, is by Conviction; a change in the sensibilities is effected by the process of Excitation; and in the will, by that of Persuasion.[3]

This system has some obvious problems of its own, but here we are mainly interested in Day's first discourse process, Explanation.

Within Day's flawed faculty psychology the inner systems were sound. The approach Day takes is what James Kinneavy would call an "aims of discourse" approach rather than a "modes" approach:

> In explanation, the object of discourse is to inform or instruct; in other and more technical words, to lead to a new conception or notion, or to modify one already existing in the mind. . .The subject or theme of explanatory discourse is some object or truth to be perceived. The state of mind to be produced by explanation, as has been before observed, is a conception. . .a Conception is that state of the understanding in which an object or truth is simply perceived, without any affirmation or denial respecting it.[4]

This was the clearest and most modern discussion of the meaning and goals of explanatory discourse that had ever been written. Day's analysis of explanatory processes goes farther, however; he goes on to discuss how explanation may be achieved in a passage of startling prescience:

> The particular processes by which the explanation of an object or truth may be effected, are five in number, viz: NARRATION, DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS, EXEMPLIFICATION and COMPARISON or CONTRAST. . .
>
> 1. Narration, when the object viewed as a whole, is represented in continuous time or as in succession;
>
> 2. Description, when the object, viewed as a whole, is represented in space generally;
>
> 3. Analysis, when the object is regarded as consisting of parts related either to time or to space;
>
> 4. Exemplification, when the object is regarded as generic, including species or individuals under it, and is represented through one of the class; and
>
> 5. Comparison and Contrast, when the object is regarded as belonging to a class, and is represented through its resemblance or opposition to others of the same class.[5]

Here, in a clearly recognizable form, we have the first version of the present-day "methods of exposition" that have become the central elements of explanatory pedagogy. Day's "processes" differ from Walker's "parts of a simple theme" in that they are discrete treatments rather than parts of a single theme; they are much less obviously related to the classical topics than Walker's listings or Newman's types of amplification; and they are

clearly meant as inventive heuristics, whereas all other lists of this sort had gradually sunk into purely organizational devices.[6] In Day, however, the processes of explanation are clearly inventive. Here is how he illustrates their use:

> It is the utter ignorance of what he (the student) is to do when set to the task of writing a composition, as it is called, which makes the task so repulsive. Suppose, for illustration, that "the French Revolution of 1848" be given out as the theme of a composition. No intimation being given in regard to the object in the discussion of the theme, the mind of the pupil is left without an aim, and it cannot work. It will be the merest matter of chance whether he propose to himself any aim at all in the discussion, or whether he do not blindly and confusedly bring together manifold and incongruous aims, and his effort, pursued thus irrationally, give him only disgust from beginning to end. But let him understand that it is as necessary to settle definitely the object as the subject of his composition; to determine that he is to write a narrative of the events of that Revolution, or of its causes or its effects; or a description of its exciting scenes; or argue its necessity or its righteousness or its expediency, or exhibit it as a political movement. . . one or another of these objects and but one, and he is at once prepared to proceed rationally in his work. He knows when to begin, how to proceed, and where to end. The procedure is now all plain, simple, and satisfactory.[7]

This is the most apposite statement on the uses of invention to come out of nineteenth-century rhetorical theory.

The Elements of the Art of Rhetoric is by no means a perfect book. It is oversystematized, a common failing during the midcentury period, and it presents several overlapping discourse taxonomies which are never satisfactorily related. But Day's book, for all of its shortcomings, presents a far more fertile and thoughtful rhetorical theory than any since Campbell. Henry Day went on to write several other rhetorical textbooks promoting his theories: Rhetorical Praxis in 1861, The Art of Discourse in 1867, Grammatical Synthesis in 1867. He was the most popular American text-author during the early and mid-1870's, and his work influenced rhetorical pedagogy during that time. But his approach, which emphasized invention and the aims of discourse

as well as explanation, did not prosper for long. Day's theories went counter to another current in nineteenth-century rhetoric, a more rigid, mechanical, and stylistic current that was eventually to sweep all other approaches before it. We must now turn to the tradition that Day was up against, a tradition that would hobble the rhetoric of explanation for over forty years.

Alexander Bain and the Submergence of Explanation

Prior to 1866 there was no serious theory of composition to compete with Day's except the argumentative rhetoric of Whately. Blair's popularity was fading by 1850, as was Newman's. James Boyd's and Richard Green Parker's texts in 1844 and George Quackenbos' in 1854 were all transitional and confused texts, stealing a bit from Blair here, Newman there, Whately there. Quackenbos' Advanced Course did use an early "modes of discourse" classification that mentioned exposition, but he did not analyze it in any detail as had Day.

These modes of discourse finally found their great champion in the Scots logician and educator Alexander Bain, whose book English Composition and Rhetoric appeared in 1866. It may be said that the great theoretical battle of the late nineteenth century was between Bain and Henry Day, and that the triumph of Bain's mechanical/modal/ stylistic approach over Day's inventive/explanatory approach laid the groundwork for many of the problems that have plagued composition studies even into the present. At the heart of Bain's theory of the "Kinds of Composition"--the modes--was a sort of faculty psychology that it is surprising to see Bain supporting. It is certainly no more defensible than Day's, and Bain was a trained psychologist. He posits "three departments of the human mind-- Understanding, Will, Feelings," and develops his forms of writing around them:

> Those that have for their object to inform the Understanding, fall under three heads--Description, Narration, and Exposition. The means of influencing the Will are given under one head, Persuasion. The employing of language to excite pleasurable Feelings, is one of the chief characteristics of Poetry. The Will can be moved only through the Understanding or through the Feelings. Hence there are really but two Rhetorical ends.[8]

Bain never explains this cryptic passage.

Although Alexander Bain is probably the most influential theorist of rhetoric in the nineteenth century, his contribution to the rhetoric of explanation--or exposition, as it would henceforth be called in the literature--is ultimately negative. There are several reasons for this. First, Bain places Narration and Description outside of Exposition and equal to it. (Day, as you recall, made narration and description processes within explanation, a much more reasonable procedure.) This was to lead to a great deal of confusion and attempted rationalization over the next 80 years and was to rob exposition of several of its most important components. Second, Bain's category of exposition, as he himself handled it, was confined to scientific exposition and not concerned with any sort of popular explanation. As he put it, "exposition is the mode of handling applicable to knowledge or information in the form of what is called the Sciences, as Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Physiology, Natural History, the Human Mind." This stipulation left out many important explanatory forms and seemed to limit exposition to a very specialized area; as a result of it the association of exposition with scientific discourse alone did not die out until the 1920's. Finally, Bain's handling of exposition was marred by a crude and confusing schematic representation of various ways of handling it, oversystematized and full of subtle and novel terms.[9] The reader's short-term memory is overloaded and her patience exhausted by this treatment. By comparison, Bain's analyses

of Narration and Description are clear and useful, and his discussion of Persuasion is relatively traditional. Only his Exposition section is confusing.

In fine, if Bain had set out to stymie the growth of explanatory pedagogy purposefully, he could not have done a much more effective job. It took the rhetoric of explanation over four decades to recover from Bain's unwitting sabotage and take its place as a central compenent of modern discourse pedagogy.

In other places I have discussed the rise of the "modes of discourse" approach to teaching composition, and there is no need to recapitulate that information here. Examining the textbooks of the period 1870-1900, it is obvious what happened to explanatory discourse pedagogy: in the standardization of composition theory which was the result of changing practices in textbook marketing, explanation became "exposition" and was assigned to a minor role for over thirty years.[10] Although Henry Day's invention/ explanation approach had some followers--A. D. Hepburn in 1875, Timothy Whiting Bancroft in 1884--the epitaph for it was engraved in 1878, when Adams Sherman Hill, Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard, published his Principles of Rhetoric. We cannot say that Hill was terribly indebted to Bain, since the Principles deals mostly with style, sentences, and persuasion, but there are sections on three of Bain's four forms. Conspicuously missing from Hill's book, however, is exposition. There is no treatment of informative discourse in Hill at all--and his book had a major influence. Bain's confusing treatment of exposition had caused it to suffer its second major setback.

Beginning in the mid-1870's, a number of books began to appear that used a "modes of discourse" approach, usually with all four modes intact. The discussions of exposition, or didactic writing as it was sometimes called, added nothing new. Most of them did not attempt to follow Bain's complex treatment, opting instead for predictable discussions of tone, style, clearness and simplicity, and the generic literary types associated with exposition (history, travels, the essay, etc). There is no outstanding text to point to until 1886.

The great popularizer of Bain's theories--because his explanations of them were so much easier to follow than Bain's--was John F. Genung, whose Practical Elements of Rhetoric appeared in that year, setting the essential elements of "current-traditional rhetoric" down for all who followed. To be fair to Genung, his book owed something to Newman and Day as well as to Bain--but the greater part of his debts were to the Scotsman. In his discussion of exposition, Genung did try to remove some of the pure-science stigma that Bain had left on the term. "By exposition," said Genung, "people generally understand setting forth the meaning of things; and this we may regard as its fundamental office."[11] He mentions criticism and popular exposition as well as scientific exposition, and divides exposition into two "fundamental processes": Intensive Exposition, or Definition, and Extensive Exposition, or Division. Each of these categories takes in certain techniques.

Though not so hopeless as Bain's, Genung's explanation of exposition was still clumsy and oversystematized; the eclipse of this vitally important form of discourse continued. Genung counteracted Hill's dismissal of exposition, but beyond that he did not much advance it, and neither did the next hugely successful composition textbook, Barrett Wendell's 1891 English Composition,

which generally considered stylistic and structural questions and not discourse taxonomies. It is not until 1893 that explanatory discourse takes its next important step.

Renascence of Explanation

It is not surprising that the rhetoric of explanation should have reached its nadir with Hill, the least interesting of the "Big Four" rhetoricians of the late nineteenth century, and not surprising that it should begin to reappear and be revitalized in the work of the man generally considered the most thoughtful and original of that group: Fred Newton Scott of Michigan. In Paragraph-Writing of 1893, Scott and his co-author Joseph Denney made several signal contributions to rhetorical theory as it affects explanation: First, they simplified the complex and confusing expository systems of Bain and Genung, and second, they enunciated a coherent and easily teachable classification system for paragraphs--a system that was to have an important effect on explanation pedagogy.

Scott and Denney followed Genung in that they saw exposition as either scientific or popular, and they presented what they called "Scientific Exposition"--which was largely, in their view, a device for planning an essay, not for organizing one:

> It is evident that the kind of exposition illustrated above is useful mainly for planning and outlining a subject. It is concerned with laying the groundwork for subsequent discussion, description, or narration. It analyzes, defines, divides, and classifies; it plays an important part in planning every essay that is written, whether in description, narration, or argumentation; and for that reason it will be treated under the headings that follow: Analysis by Partition; Analysis by Division; Exposition by Definition; Exposition by Similarity and Contrast-- all of these being presented mainly as helps to planning and outlining themes.[12]

Again, as in Day, we see the purely heuristic nature of these early "methods of exposition." Scott and Denney also allowed for "Popular Exposition," which was mainly a classification of essays into different types: Didactic Essays, Conversational Essays, Critical Essays.

At the same time that Scott and Denney were recommending these invention-oriented methods of exposition, however, they were also offering their theory of the paragraph. The Paragraph-Writing theory was built on Bain's, but it bore the same relation to Bain's collection of rigid rules that a sleek 4-6-4 compound locomotive of 1893 bore to a funnel-stacked steam puffer of Civil War vintage. Scott and Denney's paragraph theory, carefully worked out and internally coherent, is the paragraph theory that has lasted with few changes to the present day (in pedagogy if not in theory). What is important about this theory for the present inquiry is that it offers for the first time the "Means of Developing Paragraphs," which are constants in paragraph theory and which powerfully affected explanatory theory.

Scott and Denney's "means of development" descended in some senses from Newman's conception of "amplification," but they were more mechanical in application because of the paragraph's smaller scope:

> If we regard the topic sentence (of a paragraph) as the germ-idea, it is evident that it contains, potentially, all that may be said on the subject in hand. The work of the other sentences is to bring out and develop clearly the thought contained in the topic- sentence, or so much of the thought as is necessary for the purpose which the writer has in view. The means by which they do this will of course vary in different cases; and the forms in which the growing idea clothes itself as the paragraph progresses will present many different modifications.
>
> All of these various forms and means of developing the germ- idea may, however, be grouped, for practical purposes, under the following heads: repeating the theme in other words; defining or limiting the theme; presenting its contrary; explaining or amplifying its meaning by examples, illustrations, or quotations; particularizing by means of specific instances or details; presenting proofs, and applying or enforcing the theme.13

Here, in its primary form, we have a listing of the "means of developing paragraphs" that would come to be so generally accepted. We know them, of course, by their "short titles": Repetition, Definition, Contrast, Illustration, Details, Proofs, Enforcement.

After Paragraph-Writing, the rhetoric of explanation began once again to receive attention from teachers and authors, and as the vast popularity of the modes-of-discourse approach to teaching writing became a stranglehold, nearly all texts fell in line and included a chapter on exposition. (Even A. S. Hill grudgingly included a chapter on exposition in his 1895 revision.) Most of these were still shallow, however; a typical voice is that of Arlo Bates: "Exposition is a statement, an explanation, or a setting forth. . . Exposition differs from Description in that it deals directly with the meaning or intent of its subject instead of with its appearance."[14] And Hill, in his revision: "Exposition may be briefly defined as explanation...the paramount quality in all such writing is clearness. . . To secure clearness in exposition a writer should pay special attention to orderly arrangement. . .etc. etc."[15] Dogmatic commonplaces such as these, interlarded with liberal doses of illustrations and examples, provided most of the explanatory pedagogy of the 1890's.

As I have mentioned elsewhere, one by-product of the popularity of the modes of discourse was the appearance, beginning in the nineties, of books devoted to only one of the four modes. The first single-mode texts were not rhetoric texts, but rather readers: the "Specimens" series published by Henry Holt & Co. George P. Baker's Specimens of Argumentation came out in 1893, and it was closely followed by Specimens of Exposition, by Hammond Lamont, in 1894. (C. S. Baldwin's Specimens of Prose Description and W. T. Brewster's Specimens of Prose Narration appeared in 1895.) Lamont's book is the one that

we must note. He was, however, a derivative writer, and there is nothing original in his summing up of current explanatory pedagogy:

> In brief, then, the term exposition in this volume has been taken broadly to include all writing, the main purpose of which is to explain. Exposition differs from argumentation in that it merely explains, rather than convinces or persuades; from description and narration, in that it deals with a class rather than with an individual. For an adequate exposition the first requisite is clearness, the second, force. To secure these qualities, the most important principles to be observed are unity, logical division and arrangement of material, and illustration of general statements by specific examples.[16]

Lamont's specimens included examples from science, history, economics, political science, and literary criticism.

In 1895 the division between the rhetorics of argument and explanation was sealed as George P. Baker published his Principles of Argumentation, the first post-1870 rhetoric text to treat only of persuasive discourse. Baker took up a line that had been little defended since Whately, and his well-written text produced a wave of interest in argumentative discourse. It may indeed be said that Baker, in writing the first modern argumentation text, started in motion forces that would, nineteen years later, result in the foundation of the Speech Association of America and the split-off from English departments of devotees of argument and the oral-discourse tradition which seemed to go along with it.

The exceptional success of Baker's book prompted other authors to attempt single-mode rhetoric texts as they had followed him into single-mode readers. The most prolific, though hardly the most successful, of the single-mode authors was Gertrude Buck, who published A Course in Argumentative Writing and A Course in Expository Writing in 1899 and A Course in Narrative Writing in 1096. None of these texts was very successful, but A Course in Expository Writing must be pointed cut as the first explanation textbook as

well as the first conscientious attempt to dissect exposition and analyze its relations with other modes. It is unfortunate that Buck, a student of the brilliant Fred Scott at Michigan and an important rhetorical theorist in her own right, should have been such a poor textbook-author. A Course in Expository Writing was not written to the level of students at all; it was a theoretical investigation of the nature of exposition that attempted to relate organic thought processes to writing as a learned skill. Basing her theory in associationist and early cognitive psychology, Buck leads her reader through description (which to her is cognate with exposition) and definition as the main processes of explaining.[17]

Buck's explanation of exposition is theoretically intriguing, but the book is stylistically turgid, unclear on certain major issues, and written to a level far above college students'. Rather than revivifying the tradition of explanation as Baker had revived argument, A Course in Expository Writing merely continued the conception of explanation as merely one mode among others. Buck's book, however, shows that interest in explanation was not dead, since it went through three editions in spite of its problems. The academic climate was changing, and explanation would not stay down for long.

The Watershed: Fulton's Expository Writing

The story of explanatory discourse in the twentieth century is the story of the slow rise of a renewed version of Henry Day's "processes of explanation" and the gradual incorporation into explanatory discourse of every non-argumentative form of discourse. During this same period, courses in general composition gradually came to be called "expository writing" courses and the pragmatically-useful nature of explanation became obvious. In this century the final break took place between "rhetoric"--argument--and

"composition"--explanation-- as the politics of university departmentalization drove the two related discplines apart. From this divorce emerged modern English departments and Speech departments, respectively teaching explanation (exposition) and argumentation. Let us examine the way in which this situation arose.

The status of explanation as the new century opened was little better than it had been in 1870. Almost every textbook had a section on exposition, and almost every section was the same: "clearness, unity, perspicuity." Some texts offered lists of "types of exposition," which like the essay, philosophical dialogues, etc. Little was obvious about the business of exposition except that it was intellectually moribund; not even the theoretical speculations of a Scott or a Buck seemed able to attract any attention or support. Meanwhile, the burgeoning "argumentation" industry started by George Baker was attracting interest from serious rhetorical scholars. Men like C. S. Baldwin gave their real attention to matters rhetorical while churning out derivative writing texts to make money.

It must be admitted that at this time there was no really sound theoretical base for explanation, whereas argument could draw on sources all the way from classical antiquity to the present. Most books dealt with exposition by the use of many exemplary passages; outside of the simplest sorts of definitions--"exposition is explanation," etc.--there was no reliable theory. In 1906 a second "Exposition" rhetoric appeared, Mitchill and Carpenter's Exposition in Class-Room Practice, but it was a dull and mechanical text which failed quickly. It began to seem during this period that explanatory discourse could not free itself from the shadow of the modal approach, that it had no theory beyond the simplest recitation of

commonplaces, that it was indeed a low-level skill. Absent a popular approach like Baker's treatment of argument, the rhetoric of explanation languished.

Then, in 1912, the watershed book appeared: Expository Writing, by Maurice Garland Fulton. This was the book that created expository writing as a genre in the minds of most college teachers. Expository Writing was not a true rhetoric text; rather, it was a modified anthology with explanations, containing a long introductory section on the nature of exposition and 43 skilfully-selected essays illustrating expository writing. Fulton's book did not differ markedly from Lamont's earlier Specimens of Exposition--except in the organization of the text, which was to prove to be paradigmatic for expository writing. Expository Writing was the first text- -and certainly the first popular and influential text--to organize its selections around what Fulton called the "special processes of expository writing," which included: Definition, Scientific Classification, Division, Statement of a Problem, Description, and Narration. Expository Writing, in print from 1912 through 1953, provided the central model for all the exposition texts which followed--and their numbers were legion.

Maurice Fulton himself was hardly an important theoretician. Rather, he was a functionary, given to the creation of anthologies, who happened to "hit it big" on this one by conjoining two ideas for the first time: the conception of a full-length collection of readings (the logical outgrowth of short collections like the Specimens series), and Scott and Denney's conception of "expository types" and "means of development." He wished, he said, to "centre attention upon exposition since it is the kind of writing that is most directly serviceable in practical life"--an apologia that would be echoed by many another author in the years to come.[18] To give Fulton his due, he had

read and studied every scrap of material on exposition written between 1870 and 1912, and his command of the material allowed him to write an introductory section that is the best synopsis of early explanatory theory available. Exposition, said Fulton, is "that kind of writing that has as its primary function the essential unfolding of any phenomenon, hypothesis, or generalization to the understanding of the reader." Though nothing in Expository Writing was truly original, the book catalyzed and welded together terms and an approach that would henceforth be associated with the term "exposition."

After 1912, the methods of exposition soon became the accepted means of conceptualizing explanation as a process, and the subsequent history of written rhetoric in this country is essentially a history of the waxing of expository writing. Between 1910 and 1925 there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in exposition that finally matched the post-Baker argumentation boom. The term "Methods of Exposition," which I have been using freely as a standard term, was introduced by John Genung in his revised Outlines of Composition and Rhetoric in 1915, and soon the "methods approach" was the unquestioned champion.

Twentieth Century Exposition

Explanatory rhetoric as it developed during this century was affected by four important elements, elements that determined its nature and position in education. They were: 1) the decay of the modal classification of discourse and the failure of any other taxonomy to supplant it; 2) the concurrent popularity of the Deweyite "English for Life Skills" movement, which made the teaching of "practical" exposition seem most logical; 3) the complete acceptance after 1910 of Scott and Denney's "means of developing paragraphs,"

which were small-scale analogues of the methods of exposition; 4) the tendency for expository genres to split off from general compo ion once their pedagogy had achieved a sufficiently developed formal character, as has been the case for journalism, technical writing, and business writing. Taken together, these elements would come to mean that following 1950 or so, the teaching of composition and the teaching of exposition would come to be one and the same, and that general composition courses would remain inescapably abstract and unworldly in spite of the "practical" cachet of exposition.

The decay of the modes-of-discourse approach to teaching writing I have covered in some detail in "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse."[19] It suffices here to say that the four-modes approach, which controlled composition pedagogy (we can no longer say rhetorical pedagogy, for "rhetoric" was a separate area by 1920) from the mid-nineties through the second World War, began to falter during the twenties, largely because of inner contradictions. The weakness of narration and description as autonomous classes was early obvious; these forms obviously belonged in fiction-writing courses and were increasingly found there. At the same time, rhetoric reclaimed its own and argumentation got its most rigorous treatments from teachers of speech communication. What remained for detailed treatment in composition courses alone was exposition, and writing teachers recognized this fact during the 1920's and 1930's.

At the same time, the practical uses of exposition, which in its early days was still heavily identified with science, were becoming clear. John Dewey, in such books as Democracy and Education, was recommending that students be given practical skills that would make them productive citizens of a democracy, and the teaching of expository writing fell into the character of

a productive skill more clearly than anything else purveyed by English departments. The case was put succinctly in 1920 by Henry Burrowes Lathrop:

> The discarding of systematic treatises on rhetoric was perfectly natural and necessary. The earlier treatises on the art of English composition could be little more than adaptations of Cicero and Quintilian--authors concerned with the art of persuasive oratory. . .But Latin and Greek rhetoric was far too narrow as a basis for the theory of modern prose. It had as its aim the production of a type of character essentially unscientific and essentially biased in its whole view of life and letters. The necessity of developing a facile means of communication for the multiform activities of modern life--the need of a discipline in the statement of fact and the explication of ideas for their own sake in fields of science and technology, and of journalism, the complexity of modern business, and the resulting need of a wide- spread command of an accurate and even a fairly refined style as a part of general education, requires the laying of a foundation for writing which does not look to the development of rhetorical ability in the narrow sense as its directing force.[20]

Lathrop went on to apply an interesting form of Lockean associationism to expository methods, tracing all the methods back to comparative conceptualizing.

The same thought expressed by Lathrop was voiced by a number of early (and late) expository pedagogues. Here is Mervin Curl, whose 1919 Expository Writing was the first full-scale expository rhetoric text after Fulton:

> "The Anglo-Saxons," Emerson said, "are the hands of the world"--they more than any other people, turn the wheels of the world, do its work, keep things moving. . .we may safely assert that Expository Writing is the hands of literature. In a world which man even as yet only slightly understands, surrounded as he is by his fellows who constantly baffle his intelligence, and shut up within the riddle of himself, Exposition attempts to explain, to make clear, to tear away the clouds of mystery and ignorance. Exposition attempts to answer the endless curiousity of man . . .Obviously, in making the answers the writing will often be garbed in the sack suit of business, will sometimes roll up its sleeves, will pull on the overalls or tie the apron. . .But it may also appear in the opulence of evening costume, and criticize the ensemble of an orchestra, discuss the diplomacy of Europe, address us in appreciation of the Arts. . .In any case, it will be answering the endless curiousity of man.[21]

With the vocational emphasis obvious in American education as early as 1900, it is not difficult to understand the attractiveness that this most "practical" of the modes had for teachers.

Adding to the attractiveness of exposition was the fact that in the methods of exposition teachers found a neatly packaged and easily taught pedagogical tool, a tool of a sort no other mode offered. The quick standardization of the "methods" approach was due in large part to its resemblance--down to specific terms--to the extremely popular paragraph pedagogy of Scott and Denney. Over 90% of the textbooks appearing between 1900 and 1930 used the "means of developing paragraphs" originally introduced in Paragraph-Writing; even the appallingly influential "handbooks" of grammar and organization that began appearing in the 1900's used Scott and Denney's terms. The lists used sometimes differed in specific terms, but there were certain core "means" that were nearly always found: Definition, Repetition, Details, Specific Instances, Comparison/ Contrast, Proof, Cause and Effect. These words were part of the everyday jargon of the writing teacher by 1920, and more and more they were also found as the informing structures of the "Exposition" chapters of books as well.

Although the "means of developing paragraphs" helped to spread the terms of the methods, there are important practical differences between the application of such terms on the paragraph level and on the level of the whole discourse. As much as anything, these differences help to explain how the methods of exposition, which had begun life in the nineteenth century as invention heuristics, came in the twentieth to be seen as strategies of organization. The crux is this: the "paragraph means" had always been seen as structural devices within paragraphs, devices almost algorithmic in nature. A

paragraph of "cause and effect" was structured with a topic sentence detailing a cause and four or five following sentences describing the effect; a paragraph of "example" consisted of a topic sentence announcing a proposition, followed by four or five sentence of examples of that proposition in action. Though this was a relatively mechanical model, it was plausible at the paragraph level because paragraphs are relatively short units.

When the "means" and the "methods" began to run in tandem, however, the methods received a dose of organizational mechanism that went counter to the invention-oriented methods-treatment of Day or Scott and Denney. Along with a conception of the terms of the means of paragraph development, teachers picked up a conception of their generally organizational use, and the methods were transmuted by their association with the means. From being perceived as prewriting tools, they gradually came to be thought of as "methods of development"--arrangement techniques. The paragraph was often said to be but an essay in miniature, and why, then, could not an essay be a paragraph writ large? As Norman Foerster and J. M. Steadman put the case in 1931, "In principle, a paragraph may be exactly the same as a long theme, a chapter in a book, a work in one volume, a work in many volumes."[22] Thus, in keeping company with the seductive but flawed paragraph theory of Scott and Denney, the methods of exposition lost their inventional aspects and were degraded to mere methods of arrangement.

The final element that shaped explanatory pedagogy in this century is what might be called the "secession syndrome." This term is drawn from an obvious tendency within explanatory pedagogy: in this century, whenever general or expository composition produced pedagogic systems that were vocational and that relied on concrete rather than abstract "methods"-based

forms, such systems would secede from general composition pedagogy and form the core of a separate and more specialized communications course. The three clear examples of such secession during the last eighty years have been journalism, technical writing, and business writing courses. All three of these areas began by teaching exposition, all of them found that the specialized concrete forms that seemed most vital to their interests could not easily fit into a traditionally abstract composition course, and all three left general composition.

The loss of all formal ties to nonacademic writing that is illustrated by journalism, technical writing and business writing courses moving out on their own has hurt explanatory pedagogy. The rhetoric of explanation has become divorced from such forms as news stories, columnar essays, editorials, letters of all kinds, business and technical proposals, reports of every description--just to name the major forms--and this loss has left the course in general exposition with only audienceless abstractions--the methods of exposition--and one orphan form, the "research paper," to teach. From this fact comes much of the continuing sterility of the "expository writing" course.

The Rhetoric of Explanation: Modern Voices

The remainder of the historical tale is soon told. Rhetoric in the twentieth century continued, under the auspices of the "public speaking" movement, to be concerned with persuasion - even though such important voices or 1. A. Richards' accused persuasion of "poaching" on other aims of discourse.[23] In composition, the modal approach to writing instruction waned as the methods of exposition waxed. In texts using the modes, exposition was usually presented as the "first among equals," and nearly every post-1930 educational trend worked to pull down the modes and advance the teaching of

exposition. The "American Writing" texts of the 1930's and 1940's, the "communications" and "General Semantics" texts of the 1940's and 1950's, all used some version of the methods of exposition. After 1950 there was hardly any need to continue to identify exposition texts by name, because by that time the revolutionaries had become the government and composition was firmly in the hands of those committed to expository writing. By 1970 even the last die-hard remnants of the modal system had slunk discredited from the field, and no discourse taxonomy put forward had the staying power of the methods of exposition. They became, de facto, the central conceptual structures of most standard composition courses. Advanced by "readers" as well as rhetorics, they stand today as living representatives of a pedagogy with almost no idea of its own genesis. Expository writing is a practice without a past, a method without a proof of its usefulness, a tradition without a theory.

Michael Halloran has pointed out the difference between a theory and a tradition in rhetorical history, and the story of the rhetoric of explanation bears out his duality.[24] There have been theorists of explanation--and here we can return to the more exact and less pretentious term--but their ideas have never been as important to pedagogy as have the "methods." It is sad but true to say there was no real rhetorical theory attached to explanation. The pedagogy worked itself out in textbooks according to laws of the marketplace and cultural stimuli; nothing new or innovative was propounded. It was not until the early 1960's, when composition studies began to shake off the lethargy that had long been associated with its second-class status within English departments, that we again see a vital scholarly tradition in explanatory rhetoric, a tradition that had been missing since the death of Fred Scott. Out of this renaissance in composition came the two primary

modern statements on explanatory rhetoric, James L. Kinneavy's 1970 treatise on A Theory of Discourse and Frank J. D'Angelo's A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric.

Kinneavy's seminal book proposes a taxonomy of discourse based on a synthesis of classifications created by theorists as diverse as Roman Jakobson and C. S. Peirce. The classes of discourse derived by Kinneavy are these: Expressive, Referential, Literary, and Persuasive, corresponding to the common terms "personal writing," "explanation," "creative writing," and "argument or persuasion."[25] These four classes are based upon the aims of discourse (as were Henry Day's classes) rather than on an after-the-fact judgment about what a piece of discourse has accomplished (as were Bain's modal classes).

Kinneavy's reference discourse, which is essentially cognate with what I have here been calling explanation or exposition (a term upon which Kinneavy frowns, for various plausible reasons), puts its "emphasis on the reality to which reference is made," hence the name. It is a sort of discourse meant to give us, in Sprat's words, "a Dominion over Things, and not only over one anothers Judgements." Reference discourse is further subdivided into three sorts: exploratory, informative, and scientific. "Exploratory discourse fundamentally asks a question," says Kinneavy, "Informative discourse answers it. Scientific discourse proves it."[26] A Theory of Discourse goes into great detail on the syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics of each of these subdivisions. The depth and breadth of Kinneavy's scholarship has produced an impressive range of support for his theoretical proposals.

Much more speculative than A Theory of Discourse is Frank D'Angelo's A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric. D'Angelo's thesis in this short book is that both thought and discourse are structural, that both are controlled by certain

inherent conceptual patterns, and that therefore thinking relates invention, arrangement, and style in ways that have as yet been little understood. The same mental processes are used in each canon. "We call these processes 'topics' when they serve a heuristic function," says D'Angelo, "we call them 'patterns of arrangement' when they are used to organize discourse; we call them stylistic when they inform sentences. All, in fact, are symbolic manifestations of the same underlying thought processes."[27] Having made this statement, D'Angelo goes on to give instances of it in action.

The most obvious and popular application of D'Angelo's conceptual theory has been his use of the "conceptual patterns of arrangement," or "paradigms," as he calls them. The paradigms, says D'Angelo, are "dynamic organizational processes, not merely static conventional patterns." They are "universal patterns of discourse containing structural features which underlie all languages." When D'Angelo comes to finally list the paradigms in his textbook Process and Thought in Composition, we are not surprised to see that they are familiar: Analysis, Description, Classification, Exemplification, Definition, Comparison, Analogy, Narration, Process, Cause and Effect. There is a sense of deja vu about this list; though D'Angelo works hard to reify these paradigms as conceptual structures, their presentation in his text is as straight mechanical methods of development. D'Angelo may be right in his contention that the paradigms are avatars of basic conceptual patterns, but despite his plausible theoretical rationale, the paradigms seem not to have advanced beyond the old methods of exposition in any practical sense.[28]

Conclusion: The Future of Explanatory Rhetoric

This overview of the development of the rhetoric of explanation leads unavoidably to a comparison of the rhetorics of argumentation and

explanation. For any reflective person, such a comparison can reveal only one truth: at the present, our rhetorical knowledge of explanation is much less developed than our knowledge of persuasion. As we have seen, there are good reasons for the immaturity of explanatory rhetoric: the fact that the study of explanation is only 200 years old; the fact that spurious modal distinctions obscured the importance of explanation for years; the fact that general explanatory theory was deserted by the most important of its concrete forms during this century; the fact that explanation seemed for too long the responsibility of "the comma-splice brigade," as one Speech professor refers to freshman-English instructors. The rhetoric of explanation has suffered some serious setbacks, and we cannot wonder that it is less developed than traditional persuasive rhetoric.

There are, however, many signs that the rhetoric of explanation may be the rhetoric of the future. Chief among them are what computer scientists call the "information revolution," and the geometrically-increasing importance of explanation in the modern world. Student realization of the importance of explanation is shown in the skyrocketing enrollments in specialized business and technical-writing courses, not to mention the ever- more-common practice of industries hiring special consultants in communications. Explanation is becoming as important as persuasion in our increasingly complex and intermediated world.

Our knowledge about how explanation may best be accomplished is growing as well, although much work currently being done is speculative. Modern discourse theory and text linguistics will obviously have important ramifications for explanation and information transfer; particularly promising is what is called "new/old information theory," which analyzes communication

in terms of previous knowledge and level of information need.[29] It is hoped that this will be an area in which explanatory theory can be developed very highly, because comprehension of information is much easier to order to scientific measure than is level of adherence or assent to a proposition.

Important work is also being done on questions of audience for explanation, particularly in the field of technical communication. Even the field of explanatory stylistics is awakening from its slumber, and the traditional calls for clearness and perspicuity in explanatory style are being supplemented by sophisticated discussions of other stylistic options available to writers and speakers.[30] The very structures by which usable information is delivered are being investigated in novel and rigorous fashion by a new sort of linguistic analysis, analysis of cohesion.[31] As even this short list shows, the rhetoric of explanation is tending away from its traditional home in English and toward interdisciplinary approaches, with important contributions coming from psychology, linguistics, and information theory.

The rhetoric of explanation is at an important point in its development, a crossroads from which it could take a number of paths. One path leads to further disciplinary fragmentation, with practitioners in English, communications, linguistics, and psychology continuing to work independently of each each other. Another path leads toward synthesis, with all practitioners sharing information and learning from one another without departmental boundaries interfering, developing explanation into, if not a science, at least a coherent body of knowledge. My vote is for the latter path. The history of the rhetoric of explanation shows the results of following the path of fragmentation. If all of us can learn from our mistakes, perhaps the future will give evidence of how clearly superior is the path of cooperation.

NOTES

1. The question of invention in nineteenth-century America is discussed by James A. Berlin in "The Transformation of Invention in Nineteenth Century American Rhetoric" (Southern Speech Communications Journal 46 1981, 292-304), but Berlin is less concerned with practice or textbooks than with theory. He does not mention Newman, and his reference to Day seems to discount the fact that Day's approach to invention was quite popular.

2. Henry N. Day, Elements of the Art of Rhetoric (Hudson, Ohio: W. Skinner & Co., 1850), pp. v-vi.

3. Day, Elements, p. 42.

4. Day, Elements, pp. 51-52.

5. Day, Elements, pp. 54-55.

6. My thanks to Nancy Johnson for pointing out to me the importance of Day's thought to the rhetoric of explanation.

7. Day, Elements, pp. vi-vii.

8. Alexander Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric (New York: D. Appleton, 1866). p. 19.

9. See Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric, pp. 186-208.

10. It is about this time that a new element enters the picture we have of the development of composition theories: the idea of the marketplace. By the early 1880's, textbook publishing companies were established, many of which--Harper, Houghton Mifflin, Scribner's--still exist today. Rhetorical theories had to begin to "sell themselves" in this ever-more-competitive marketplace by selling textbooks. The marketplace idea in text publishing meant in practice that instead of several separate theoretical approaches co-existing (as the neo-Ciceronian and Blairian views had in the eighteenth

century or the Blairian and Whatelian views in the early nineteenth) the economic squeeze was on to push out whatever methods sold fewer texts. This Darwinian-selection process would lead, by the end of the 1880's, to the demise of a vital rhetoric of explanation, and by the end of the century to a unified and unchallengeable model of composition pedagogy that would last, little changed, into our own time.

11. John F. Genung, The Practical Elements of Rhetoric (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1886), p. 383.

12. Fred Newton Scott and Joseph Villiers Denney, Paragraph-Writing (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1893), p.76.

13. Scott and Denney, Paragraph-Writing, p. 25. For more information on the history of the paragraph form, see Paul C. Rodgers, Jr., "Alexander Bain and the Rise of the Organic Paragrph," Quarterly Journal of Speech 51 (1965), 399-408.

14. Arlo Bates, Talks on Writing English (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1896), pp. 126-128.

15. Adams Sherman Hill, The Principles of Rhetoric, Revised Edition (New York: American Book Co., 1895), pp.300-314.

16. Hammond Lamont, Specimens of Exposition (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1894), p. xxiv.

17. For more information on Buck, see Rebecca J. Burke, Gertrude Buck's Rhetorical Theory (Manhattan: Kansas State University, 1979).

18. Maurice Garland Fulton, Expository Writing (New York: Macmillan Co., 1912), p. v.

19. See Robert J. Connors, "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse," College Composition and Communication 32 (1981), 444-455.

20. Henry Burrowes Lathrop, Freshman Composition (New York: The Century Co., 1920), p. viii.

21. Mervin J. Curl, Expository Writing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), pp. 1-2.

22. Norman Foerster and J. M. Steadman, Jr., Writing and Thinking (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), p. 99.

23. I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936), p. 24. Although Richards calls for a new conception of rhetoric, he obviously does not mean traditional composition, which he condemns as "the dreariest and least profitable part of the waste that the unfortunate travel through in Freshman English."

24. S. Michael Halloran,"Tradition and Theory in Rhetoric" Quarterly Journal of Speech 62 (1976), 234-241

25. James L. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 61.

26. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse, p. 89.

27. Frank J. D'Angelo, A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers, 1974), pp. 28-29.

28. D'Angelo is critiqued for this in Andrea A. Lunsford, "On "D'Angelo's Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric," paper delivered at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Washington, D.C., March 1980. Linguistic theory has recently posited conceptual structures in the mind that are quite different from D'Angelo's paradigms. See Derek Bickerton, Roots of Language (Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, 1981).

29. See, for instance, William Vande Kopple, "Functional Sentence Perspective," CCC 33 (1982), 50-63.

30. Annette Bradford and S. Michael Halloran, "Figures of Speech in the Language of Science and Technology," in Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse (Carbondale, Southern Illinois Univ. Press, forthcoming).

31. M. A. K. Halliday and Ruquaiya Hasan, Cohesion in English (London: Longmans Group, 1976).